

## 2 musts for ballot

Aug. 22, 2008 12:00 AM  
The Arizona Republic

Two critical initiatives for Arizona's future are hanging in the balance: a comprehensive transportation package and trust-land reform.

Fast action and favorable rulings by the Arizona Supreme Court could still save the day.

Propositions 203 and 103 could still get on the ballot.

Voters could still get the chance to adopt essential measures that would help us get around, protect some of the jewels of our landscape and raise extra money for education.

It's too bad that getting these two propositions onto the ballot has turned into such a high-wire act.

Because they're both winners for Arizona.

The TIME initiative, short for Transportation and Infrastructure Moving Arizona's Economy (Proposition 203), would use a 1-cent increase in the state sales tax for freeways, roads, rail and bike paths.

Our Land, Our Schools (Proposition 103)

would reform the antiquated system of managing Arizona's 9 million acres of state trust land.

More than 570,000 acres would be preserved outright, including areas in the White Tank Mountains, the McDowell Mountains, the foothills of the Superstition Mountains, the desert around Lake Pleasant and part of landmark Picacho Peak.

Local governments would be able to buy trust land for preservation.

And the State Land Department would get the resources to manage the remaining land more profitably - a boon for students, since most of the income goes to schools.

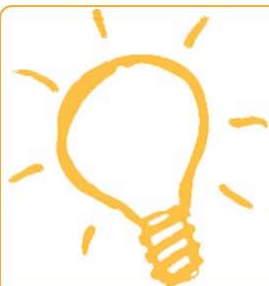
Arizonans have spent years wrangling over trust-land reform. Our Land, Our Schools is a balanced, reasonable solution that has virtually no opposition.

The TIME initiative is more controversial, but it has powerful backing in the business community and from Gov. Janet Napolitano.

Yet the measures are teetering. The Secretary of State's Office disqualified them because a sampling of the petitions found too many invalid signatures.

Supporters say they can verify enough of the rejected signatures to get the initiatives

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reinstated.

But a lower-court ruling Thursday went against TIME.

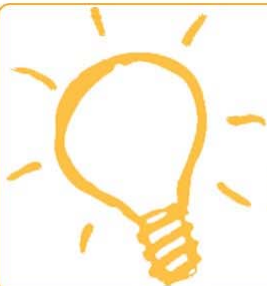
The trust-land initiative is likely to meet the same fate.

Lawyers are asking for a quick state Supreme Court review. It would have to occur within days for the propositions to meet deadlines for preparing election material.

Down the road, when the heat of elections is over, we must have a close analysis of the initiative process and how so many measures, including others that are being challenged, had so many problems with signatures.

For the moment, there's still a glimmer of hope that TIME and trust-land reform will go to the ballot. Arizonans need the chance to bring our transportation system and the management of 9 million acres into the 21st century.

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